

If you make the trip to Washington for the 56th presidential inaugural, I sincerely hope you will be able to visit our office in Washington, D.C. The office is located in Room 2186 of the Rayburn House Office Building (first floor). Be prepared, however, to wait up to an hour or more to get into the building, which is located across Independence Ave. from the U.S. Capitol.

As we have during previous inaugurations, our office staff and I look forward to seeing you and are committed to making your experience as rewarding as possible.

The inauguration of President Obama, the theme of which is "The New Birth of Freedom," promises to be one of the most historic and memorable moments of our nation's history. As many as four million people from around the world are expected to visit our nation's capital to witness the formal installation of America's new president. The fact that Inauguration Day comes on the day after Martin Luther King, Jr. Day provides many people an extra day to make their way to Washington to be a part of this historic occasion.

As you are aware, my office will receive only a scant number of tickets for the official swearing-in ceremony. I very much regret not being able to accommodate everyone's desire for tickets to the noontime swearing-in. ***With approximately 198 tickets and approximately 4,000 requests, the process has been very difficult.***

□

You will be notified separately by phone, email or U.S. Mail if your name has been selected in the random drawing for a ticket to the ceremony and about procedures to pick up the ticket, which cannot be mailed.

□

Meanwhile, officials in the federal government and the District of Columbia are making plans to accommodate all who will attend the ceremonies. In keeping with its pledge to make the inauguration of President-elect Obama one of the most open and accessible in history, the Presidential Inaugural Committee has opened the entire length of the National Mall to the public so that more people than ever before will be able to witness the swearing-in of the President from a vantage point in sight of the Capitol.

The Inaugural Committee has made space available at this historic location to members of the public who are unable to obtain tickets to the swearing-in. Those who come to witness the swearing-in on the Mall will be able to watch and listen to the ceremony on large screens along the Mall. This is where most of the people will gather to be a part of history.

Also, tickets are not required for the Inaugural Parade or many of the other activities. You can obtain more information about the official inaugural ceremonies at www.pic2009.org.

The District of Columbia tourism office has compiled a list of 44 free events, including:
You may:

- View a civil rights display at the Smithsonian Institution.

- See a copy of the Gettysburg Address at the National Museum of American History.
- Visit the memorial to those who preserved freedom at the National World War II Memorial on the Mall.
- Attend a free concert by the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, on January 19 at the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage. (Tickets will be given out, one per person, first come first served, on the day of the concert.)
- Make your way to Capitol Hill's newest attraction, the Capitol Visitor Center
- Stand on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.
- Take a stroll through grand Union Station, including the Presidential Suite, where presidents waited to board trains and greeted dignitaries.

Please let me provide some other tips:

Travel: Travel in the District of Columbia will be very difficult on Inauguration Day; the only feasible mode of transportation will be the Metro subway system and buses. A good way to access the Metro subway system is through SmarTrip cards and one-day passes. The D.C. Metro will be selling special commemorative Inaugural SmarTrip cards and one-day passes on line.

Lodging: Most hotels and motels in the D.C. metro area are sold out during the Inaugural period, but accommodations can still be found in outlying areas. Be prepared to stay up to 100 miles away from Washington. Accommodations in the District of Columbia might entail multiple-night stay at exorbitantly high prices. [](#)

Weather: Dress warmly. Washington weather in January can be mild or it can be bitterly cold. Be prepared for a cold and damp day and bring a rain poncho; umbrellas will likely not be allowed due to security concerns.

If you have questions about the Inauguration, please call my office.

I hope to see you on Inauguration Day!